



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

had succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the English cruisers, and were anchored in a bay of the neighboring shore. Care was taken to inform as many as possible of the opportunity of escape thus presented, and many of his adherents were assembled, some to attend him in his flight, and others to bid him farewell. There were few in the Highlands, even of those engaged in the service of the government, who really wished misfortune to Charles Edward, though many were opposed to his enterprise, some from principle, and others because it seemed to them that the attempt must be hopeless, and could only serve to deluge the whole kingdom with blood. But even of these, there was not one, who could be tempted by gold to betray him,—a fact which reflects immortal honor upon the Highland name.

It so happened, that his course in Scotland ended where it began. Moidart was the place where he landed fourteen months before, and from this place he was now to embark, to leave the land of his fathers. His faithful chiefs and gentlemen stood round him on the shore, their attachment to him undiminished by all they had suffered in his cause, while, with his natural dignity of manner, he spoke to those whom he was leaving, of his gratitude for their generous and unexampled affection, and expressed his hope that he should return in better days, and lead them to victory again. But when he came to the trial of bidding them farewell, he could no longer command his feelings, and burst into a flood of tears. The vessels were impatiently waiting, with sails rising and anchors weighed; then, when the last of the Stuarts stepped on board, in silence and sorrow, they stood rapidly out of the harbor, and were soon lost in the dark blue sea.

ART. VII.—*Disinterment of the Relics of several Kings.*

Account of the opening of the Tomb of King Charles the First, in St. George's Chapel, Windsor. By Sir HENRY HALFORD, Bart. M. D. *Miscellaneous Works.* London. 1831.

THE manner, in which we dispose of the remains of our deceased friends, is a subject which, within the last few yea's, has occupied a greater share, than formerly, of the public at-

tention in our own vicinity. It involves not only considerations which belong to the general convenience, but includes also the gratification of individual taste, and the consolation of private sorrow. Although, in a strictly philosophical view, this subject possesses but little importance, except in relation to the convenience of survivors ; yet so closely are our sympathies enlisted with it, so inseparably do we connect the feelings of the living with the condition of the dead, that it is in vain that we attempt to divest ourselves of its influence. It is incumbent on us therefore to analyze, as far as we may be able, the principles which belong to a correct view of this subject ; since it is only by understanding these, that we may expect both reason and feeling to be satisfied.

The progress of all organized beings is towards decay. The complicated textures which the living body elaborates within itself, begin to fall asunder, almost as soon as life has ceased. The materials of which animals and vegetables are composed, have natural laws and irresistible affinities, which are suspended during the period of life, but which must be obeyed the moment that life is extinct. They continue to operate, until the exquisite fabric is reduced to a condition, in no wise different from that of the soil on which it has once trodden. In certain cases art may modify, and accident may retard, the approaches of disorganization, but the exceptions thus produced are too few and imperfect, to invalidate the certainty of the general law.

If we take a comprehensive survey of the progress and mutations of animal and vegetable life, we shall perceive, that this necessity of individual destruction is the basis of general safety. The elements which have once moved and circulated in living frames, do not become extinct, nor useless after death ; —they offer themselves as the materials from which other living frames are to be constructed. What has once possessed life, is most assimilated to the living character, and most ready to partake of life again. The plant which springs from the earth, after attaining its growth, and perpetuating its species, falls to the ground, undergoes decomposition, and contributes its remains to the nourishment of plants around it. The myriads of animals which range the woods, or inhabit the air, at length die upon the surface of the earth, and, if not devoured by other animals, prepare for vegetation the place which receives their remains. Were it not for this law of nature, the

soil would be soon exhausted, the earth's surface would become a barren waste, and the whole race of organized beings, for want of sustenance, would become extinct.

Man alone, the master of the creation, does not willingly stoop to become a participator in the routine of nature. In every age, he has manifested a disposition to exempt himself, and to rescue his fellow, from the common fate of living beings. Although he is prodigal of the lives of other classes, and sometimes sacrifices a hundred inferior bodies, to procure himself a single repast, yet he regards with scrupulous anxiety the destination of his own remains; and much labor and treasure are devoted by him to ward off for a season the inevitable courses of nature. Under the apprehension of posthumous degradation, human bodies have been embalmed, their concentrated dust has been inclosed in golden urns, monumental fortresses have been piled over their decaying bones;—with what success, and with what use, it may not be amiss to consider.

We have selected a few instances, in which measures have been taken to protect the human frame from decay, which will be seen to have been in some cases partially successful, in others not so. They will serve as preliminaries to the general considerations which are connected with the subject.

One of the most interesting accounts of the preservation of a body, the identity of which was undoubted, is that of the disinterment of King Edward I. of England. The readers of English history will recollect that this monarch gave, as a dying charge to his son, that his heart should be sent to the Holy land, but that his body should be carried in the van of the army, till Scotland was reduced to obedience.

He died in July, 1307, and notwithstanding his injunctions, was buried in Westminster Abbey in October of the same year. It is recorded, that he was embalmed, and orders for renewing the cerecloth about his body were issued in the reigns of Edward III. and Henry IV. The tomb of this monarch was opened and his body examined in January, 1774, under the direction of Sir Joseph Ayloffe, after it had been buried 467 years. The following account we extract from a contemporaneous volume of the Gentleman's Magazine.

' Some gentlemen of the society of antiquaries, being desirous to see how far the actual state of Edward 1st's body answered to the methods taken to preserve it, obtained leave to open the large

stone sarcophagus, in which it is known to have been deposited, on the north side of Edward the Confessor's chapel. This was accordingly done on the morning of January 2, 1774; when in a coffin of yellow stone, they found the royal body in perfect preservation, enclosed in two wrappers; one of them was of gold tissue, strongly waxed, and fresh; the other and outermost considerably decayed. The corpse was habited in a rich mantle of purple, paned with white, and adorned with ornaments of gilt metal, studded with red and blue stones and pearls. Two similar ornaments lay on the hands. The mantle was fastened on the right shoulder by a magnificent *fibula* of the same metal, with the same stones and pearls. His face had over it a silken covering, so fine, and so closely fitted to it, as to preserve the features entire. Round his temples was a gilt coronet of fleurs de lys. In his hands, which were also entire, were two sceptres of gilt metal; that in the right surmounted by a cross fleure, that in the left by three clusters of oak leaves, and a dove on a globe; this sceptre was about five feet long. The feet were enveloped in the mantle and other coverings, but sound, and the toes distinct. The whole length of the corpse was five feet two inches.'

This last statement, it will be observed, is the only point in which the narrative appears to disagree with history. We are generally given to understand that Edward I. was a tall man; and that he was designated in his own time by the name of Long-shanks. Baker, in his Chronicle of the Kings of England, says of him that he was tall of stature, exceeding most other men by a head and shoulders. We have not been able to find Sir Joseph Ayloffe's account of the examination, and know of no other mode of reconciling the discrepancy, but by supposing a typographical error of a figure in the account which has been quoted.

Edward I. died at Burgh-upon-Sands in Cumberland, on his way to Scotland, July 7, 1307, in the sixty-eighth year of his age.

Another instance of partial preservation, is that of the body of King Charles I., the subject of the work at the head of this article. The remains of this unfortunate monarch are known to have been carried to Windsor, and there interred by his friends, without pomp, in a hasty and private manner. It is stated in Clarendon's History of the Rebellion, that when his son, Charles II., was desirous to remove and re-inter his corpse at Westminster Abbey, it could not by any search be found. In constructing a Mausoleum at Windsor in 1813, under

the direction of George IV., then Prince Regent, an accident led to the discovery of this royal body. The workmen, in forming a subterraneous passage under the choir of St. George's chapel, accidentally made an aperture in the wall of the vault of King Henry VIII. On looking through this opening it was found to contain three coffins, instead of two, as had been supposed. Two of these were ascertained to be the coffins of Henry VIII., and of one of his queens, Jane Seymour. The other was formally examined, after permission obtained, by Sir Henry Halford, in presence of several members of the Royal family, and other persons of distinction. The account since published by Sir Henry, corroborates the one which had been given by Mr. Herbert, a groom of King Charles's bed chamber, and is published in *Wood's Athenæ Oxonienses*.

‘On removing the pall,’ says the account, ‘a plain leaden coffin presented itself to view, with no appearance of ever having been inclosed in wood, and bearing an inscription, “King Charles, 1648,” in large, legible characters, on a scroll of lead encircling it. A square opening was then made in the upper part of the lid, of such dimensions as to admit a clear insight into its contents. These were, an internal wooden coffin, very much decayed, and the body, carefully wrapped up in cere-cloth, into the folds of which a quantity of unctuous matter, mixed with resin, as it seemed, had been melted, so as to exclude, as effectually as possible, the external air. The coffin was completely full; and from the tenacity of the cere-cloth, great difficulty was experienced in detaching it successfully from the parts which it enveloped. Wherever the unctuous matter had insinuated itself, the separation of the cere-cloth was easy; and where it came off, a correct impression of the features to which it had been applied, was observed. At length the whole face was disengaged from its covering. The complexion of the skin of it was dark and discolored. The forehead and temples had lost little or nothing of their muscular substance; the cartilage of the nose was gone; but the left eye, in the first moment of exposure, was open and full, though it vanished almost immediately; and the pointed beard, so characteristic of the period of the reign of King Charles, was perfect. The shape of the face was a long oval; many of the teeth remained; and the left ear, in consequence of the interposition of the unctuous matter between it and the cere-cloth, was found entire.

It was difficult, at this moment, to withhold a declaration, that, notwithstanding its disfigurement, the countenance did bear

a strong resemblance to the coins, the busts, and especially to the picture of King Charles the First, by Vandyke, by which it had been made familiar to us. It is true, that the minds of the spectators of this interesting sight were well prepared to receive this impression ; but it is also certain, that such a facility of belief had been occasioned by the simplicity and truth of Mr. Herbert's Narrative,—every part of which had been confirmed by the investigation, so far as it had advanced : and it will not be denied that the shape of the face, the forehead, the eye, and the beard, are the most important features by which resemblance is determined.

When the head had been entirely disengaged from the attachments which confined it, it was found to be loose, and without any difficulty was taken out, and held up to view. The back part of the scalp was entirely perfect, and had a remarkably fresh appearance ; the pores of the skin being more distinct, and the tendons and ligaments of the neck were of considerable substance and firmness. The hair was thick at the back part of the head, and, in appearance, nearly black. A portion of it, which has since been cleaned and dried, is of a beautiful dark brown color. That of the beard was a redder brown. On the back part of the head it was not more than an inch in length, and had probably been cut so short for the convenience of the executioner, or perhaps by the piety of friends soon after death, in order to furnish memorials of the unhappy king.

On holding up the head, to examine the place of separation from the body, the muscles of the neck had evidently retracted themselves considerably ; and the fourth cervical vertebra was found to be cut through its substance transversely, leaving the surfaces of the divided portions perfectly smooth and even, an appearance which could have been produced only by a heavy blow, inflicted with a very sharp instrument, and which furnished the last proof wanting to identify King Charles the First.

The foregoing are two of the most successful instances of posthumous preservation. The care taken in regard to some other distinguished personages has been less fortunate in its result. The coffin of Henry VIII. was inspected at the same time with that of Charles, and was found to contain nothing but the mere skeleton of the king. Some portions of beard remained on the chin, but there was nothing to discriminate the personage contained in it.

During the present century, the sarcophagus of King John has also been examined. It contained little else than a disorganized mass of earth. The principal substances found, were

some half decayed bones, a few vestiges of cloth and leather, and a long rusty piece of iron, apparently the remains of the sword-blade of that monarch.

The rapidity with which decomposition takes place in organic bodies, depends upon the particular circumstances under which they are placed. A certain temperature, and a certain degree of moisture are indispensable agents in the common process of putrefaction, and could these be avoided in the habitable parts of our globe, human bodies might last indefinitely. We shall be excused for dwelling a short time on the influence of some of these preservative agents. Where a certain degree of cold exists, it tends powerfully to check the process of destructive fermentation, and when it extends so far as to produce congelation, its protecting power is complete. Bodies of men and animals are found in situations where they have remained frozen for years and even for ages. Not many years ago, the bodies of some Spanish soldiers were found in a state of perfect preservation among the snows of the Andes, where they were supposed to have perished in attempting to cross those mountains, nearly a century ago; their costume, and some historical records, indicating the probable period of their expedition. At the Hospice of the Grand St. Bernard in the Alps, some receptacles of the dead are shown to travellers, in which, owing to the effect of perpetual frost, together with the lightness of the atmosphere, but little absolute decay has taken place in the subjects deposited during a lapse of years. But the most remarkable instance of preservation by frost of an animal body, is that of an elephant of an extinct species, discovered in 1806 in the ice of the polar sea, near the mouth of the river Lena, by Mr. Michael Adams. This animal was first seen by a chief of the Tonguse tribe, in the year 1799, at which time it was imbedded in a rock of ice about 180 feet high, and had only two feet, with a small part of the body, projecting from the side, so as to be visible. At the close of the next summer, the entire flank of the animal had been thawed out. It nevertheless required five summers, in this inclement region, to thaw the ice, so that the whole body could be liberated. At length, in 1804, the enormous mass separated from the mountain of ice, and fell over upon its side, on a sand bank. At this time it appears to have been in a state of perfect preservation, with its skin and flesh as entire as when it had existed, antecedently to the deluge, or to whatever convulsion of the

globe may have transported animals apparently of the torrid zone to the confines of the Arctic circle. The Tonguse chief cut off the tusks, which were nine feet long and weighed 200 pounds each. Two years after this event, Mr. Adams, being at Yakutsk and hearing of this event, undertook a journey to the spot. He found the animal in the same place, but exceedingly mutilated by the dogs and wolves of the neighborhood, which had fed upon its flesh, as fast as it thawed. He however succeeded in removing the whole skeleton, and in recovering two of the feet, one of the ears, one of the eyes, and about three quarters of the skin, which was covered with reddish hair and black bristles. These are now in the museum at St. Petersburg.

The foregoing facts are sufficient to shew that a low degree of temperature is an effectual preventive of animal decomposition. On the other hand, a certain degree of heat combined with a dry atmosphere, although a less perfect protection, is sufficient to check the destructive process. Warmth, combined with moisture, tends greatly to promote decomposition ; yet if the degree of heat, or the circumstances under which it acts, are such as to produce a perfect dissipation of moisture, the further progress of decay is arrested. In the arid caverns of Egypt, the dried flesh of mummies, although greatly changed from its original appearance, has made no progress towards ultimate decomposition, during two or three thousand years. It is known that the ancient Egyptians embalmed the dead bodies of their friends, by extracting the large viscera from the cavities of the head, chest and abdomen, and filling them with aromatic and resinous substances, particularly asphaltum, and enveloping the outside of the body in cloths impregnated with similar materials. These impregnations prevented decomposition for a time, until perfect dryness had taken place. Their subsequent preservation, through so many centuries, appears to have been owing, not so much to the antiseptic quality of the substance in which they are enveloped, as to the effectual exclusion of moisture and air.

In the crypt under the cathedral of Milan, travellers are shown the ghastly relics of Carlo Borromeo, as they have lain for two centuries, enclosed in a crystal sarcophagus, and bedecked with costly finery, of silk and gold. The preservation of this body is equal to that of an Egyptian mummy, yet a more loathsome piece of mockery than it exhibits, we can hardly imagine.

It will be perceived that the instances which have been detailed are cases of extraordinary exemption, resulting from uncommon care, or from the most favorable combination of circumstances ; such as can befall but an exceedingly small portion of the human race. The common fate of animal bodies is to undergo the entire destruction of their fabric, and the obliteration of their living features in a few years, and sometimes even weeks, after their death. No sooner does life cease, than the elements which constituted the vital body, become subject to the common laws of inert matter. The original affinities, which had been modified or suspended during life, are brought into operation, the elementary atoms re-act upon each other, the organized structure passes into decay, and is converted to its original dust. Such is the natural, and we may add, the proper destination, of the material part of all that has once moved and breathed.

The reflections which naturally suggest themselves in contemplating the wrecks of humanity, which have occasionally been brought to light, are such as lead us to ask, of what possible use is a resistance to the laws of nature, which, when most successfully executed, can at best only preserve a defaced and degraded image of what was once perfect and beautiful ? Could we by any means arrest the progress of decay, so as to gather round us the dead of a hundred generations in a visible and tangible shape ; could we fill our houses and our streets with mummies,—what possible acquisition could be more useless, what custom could be more revolting ? For precisely the same reason the subterranean vaults, and the walls of brick, which we construct to divide the clay of humanity from that of the rest of creation, and to preserve it separate for a time, as it were for future inspection, are neither useful, gratifying, nor ultimately effectual. Could the individuals themselves, who are to be the subjects of this care, have the power to regulate the officious zeal of their survivors, one of the last things they could reasonably desire would be, that the light should ever shine on their changed and crumbling relics.

On the other hand, when nature is permitted to take its course, when the dead are committed to the earth under the open sky, to become early and peacefully blended with their original dust, no unpleasant association remains. It would seem as if the forbidding and repulsive conditions which attend on decay, were merged and lost in the surrounding harmonies of the creation.

When the body of Major André was taken up, a few years since, from the place of its interment near the Hudson, for the purpose of being removed to England, it was found that the skull of that officer was closely encircled by a network, formed by the roots of a small tree, which had been planted near his head. This is a natural and most beautiful coincidence. It would seem as if a faithful sentinel had taken his post, to watch, till the obliterated ashes should no longer need a friend. Could we associate with inanimate clay any of the feelings of sentient beings, who would not wish to rescue his remains from the prisons of mankind, and commit them thus to the embrace of nature?

Convenience, health, and decency require that the dead should be early removed from our sight. The law of nature requires that they should moulder into dust, and the sooner this change is accomplished, the better. This change should take place, not in the immediate contiguity of survivors, not in frequented receptacles provided for the promiscuous concentration of numbers, not where the intruding light may annually usher in a new tenant, to encroach upon the old. It should take place peacefully, silently, separately, in the retired valley or the sequestered wood, where the soil continues its primitive exuberance, and where the earth has not become too costly to afford to each occupant, at least his length and breadth.

Within the bounds of populous and growing cities, interments cannot with propriety take place beyond a limited extent. The vacant tracts reserved for burial grounds, and the cellars of churches which are converted into tombs, become glutted with inhabitants, and are in the end obliged to be abandoned, though not perhaps until the original tenants have been ejected, and the same space has been occupied three or four successive times. Necessity obliges a recourse at last to be had to the neighboring country, and hence in l'aris, London, Liverpool, Leghorn, and other European cities, cemeteries have been constructed without the confines of their population. These places, in consequence of the sufficiency of the ground, and the funds which usually grow out of such establishments, have been made the recipients of tasteful ornament. Travellers are attracted by their beauty, and dwell with interest on their subsequent recollection. The scenes which, under most other circumstances, are repulsive and disgusting, are by the

joint influence of nature and art rendered beautiful, attractive, and consoling.

The situation of Mount Auburn, near Boston, is one of great natural fitness for the objects to which it is devoted. It may be doubted whether any spot, which has been set apart for the same purposes in Europe, possesses half the interest in its original features. In a few years, when the hand of taste shall have scattered among the trees, as it has already begun to do, enduring memorials of marble and granite, a landscape of the most picturesque character will be created. No place in the environs of our city will possess stronger attractions to the visiter. To the mourner it offers seclusion, amid the consoling influences of nature. The moralist and man of religion will

‘Find room
And food for meditation, nor pass by
Much, that may give him pause, if pondered fittingly.’

We regard the relics of our deceased friends and kindred, for what they have been, and not for what they are. We cannot keep in our presence the degraded image of the original frame, and if some memorial is necessary to soothe the unsatisfied want, which we feel when bereaved of their presence, it must be found in contemplating the place, in which we know that their dust is hidden. The history of mankind, in all ages, shows that the human heart clings to the grave of its disappointed wishes, that it seeks consolation in rearing emblems and monuments, and in collecting images of beauty over the disappearing relics of humanity. This can be fitly done, not in the tumultuous and harassing din of cities, not in the gloomy and almost unapproachable vaults of charnel houses;—but amidst the quiet verdure of the field, under the broad and cheerful light of heaven,—when the harmonious and ever changing face of nature reminds us by its resuscitating influences, that to die is but to live again.